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## A MODERN CITY'S HIGH-SCHOOL SYSTEM— LOS ANGELES

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In order that there may be a basis for criticism it is necessary, before entering directly on our subject, to recall the modern viewpoint of education. What interpretation do we give today to "the preparation for efficient life" that is the accepted end of this process? We submit the following as an attempt to epitomize the modern ideal:

1. A system must provide those elements of education common to all intelligent democratic peoples. These elements may be divided into three classes: (*a*) Recognizing its value as the condition for efficiency it must produce a sane health attitude on the part of its beneficiary. (*b*) It must furnish the tools of mental life with skill in their use. These will include those elements of knowledge generally accepted as fundamental, and such sympathy with others as to make the individual enter into the life of his fellows. Thus, he must have ability to read intelligently what ordinary people read—the newspaper, the magazine, and popular fiction; he must have power so to express his thoughts by tongue and pen that he may be understood; he must grasp the ordinary operations of commercial life; he must become acquainted with the conditions of civil and state government; and he must have such a knowledge of science and history that he will know where to obtain information in case of need. (*c*) It must provide conditions for the cultivation of a social will—the desire and power to use the acquired tools for others. There must be practice in helpful co-operation in effecting social ends. All education fails that does not impart a measure of self-control in attention, obedience, punctuality, industry, and self-renunciation for a worthy purpose.

2. It must recognize the claims and opportunities of its environment. There must be frank recognition of such moral tendencies as are inimical to the community and provision must be made to combat these. The call of industrial and business enterprises must be heard and the course shaped to answer it.

3. With its efforts to socialize it must recognize that each child is an individual, each is a problem with his idiosyncrasies. Treatment will be both positive and negative. Harmful habits must be eradicated, good ones inculcated. Each pupil is to be placed in the line of his possibilities and he is to be so trained that he will attempt to realize these possibilities.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROBLEMS OF THE COMMUNITY

Before judgment is passed on the efficiency of a system it is necessary to understand something of the physical and spiritual environment of its community. These can be only very imperfectly sketched in a short paper.

Originally Los Angeles was situated in a semiarid tract half-way between the Sierras and the sea. The hinterland—once water is obtained—is rich in agricultural possibilities. Citrus trees—the orange, lemon, and grape fruit—may produce on good land, under the care of experts, a yearly crop of one thousand dollars an acre. The sugar-beet, bean, wine-grape, melon, walnut, and olive are produced in quantity, while the field for the truck gardener is unlimited. Poultry and bees also add to the wealth of the community. Farming operations on a large scale, however, demand capital and great skill, for the price of land is high.

Manufacturing, except for local needs, is still to be developed.

The population of the city grew from 170,000 in 1900 to its present number of over 500,000. This rapid growth led to two great enterprises that reveal the character of the people. The first is the construction of an aqueduct costing \$25,000,000; the second is the obtaining of a harbor that will cost, as the city's share, another \$10,000,000. The first undertaking was absolutely necessary on account of the lowering of the underground water-level and the constant danger of fire in the conserving woods on the

watershed. Two mountain ranges have been tunneled and 150 miles of desert crossed in the 233 miles of this famous enterprise. With surplus water and 120,000 horse-power of electricity for sale, the venture promises profit. The harbor also promises well and many look forward to its becoming one of the greatest. In the year closing last July there passed through the harbor \$88,000,000 worth of commerce. These two enterprises will stand for all time as monuments to the force and faith of the citizens of Los Angeles.

Who are these people of enterprise that amounts to daring? They are most cosmopolitan. Five years ago one-third were of foreign birth, 50,000 British born. The native Americans are largely from the Middle Western states.

Los Angeles has in its environment some things unique. A large proportion of its population are home-owners. The presence of capital seeking investment has produced large tracts where small payments on long terms allow anyone at all provident to own his home. Frontages of fifty feet are the rule, as the twenty-five-foot lot is not popular. A trip over the residence districts exhibits not only the fine mansions of the wealthy but also miles of modest bungalows with well-kept lawns and beautiful gardens that reveal the home-loving instinct of the people. As the winter seldom brings more than a few degrees of frost and as there is vegetation wherever water is spilled, every man is a gardener. For twelve months of the year gardening is a pleasure. School problems resulting from apartment-house life are consequently less prevalent in this city than in others of its size.

Women are feeling their way into a vital participation in public life. Their clubs are becoming more truly social by the widening of their interests to include active civic and state questions. Under this movement is a strong feminist feeling. Just how deep and how sincere this is, it is difficult to say. Undoubtedly the legislation of the past three years has been strongly influenced thereby. In the schools the history departments are using the new movement with good effect, but it is felt in every department in which girls are under instruction.

A problem that confronts the community is the large number of unhappy marriages that come to light in the divorce courts.

One of the leading papers recently published statistics that revealed the granting of one divorce for every four marriages. In a community one-quarter of which belong to a church strongly averse to divorce, where the tone of the whole city is remarkably moral, there must be classes where the marriage tie is nominal. The strengthening of the home-loving instinct is not the least task that lies before this people.

Los Angeles deserves the name of being the center of "the playground of America." The annual rush of tourists from the North and East in winter is replaced in part by residents from the desert regions in summer. There is thus a constant presentation of attractions. The call of the streets is insistent. If there is no opera or play and the "movie" has no charm, there is the beach or the mountain resort and the wonderful, well-kept roads on which motoring is a delight. A school system has to be alive to face such unfair competition.

As regards business conditions the paradox continues. The presence of numbers of men of means too young to retire from active life who with zest oversee the business to which they are driven by their restless energy makes conditions trying to men of small capital. With a large class of men content to retire from the game there are many of both sexes who augment their stated income by engaging in such occupations as may open. As a result salaries, especially in clerical lines, are low and, notwithstanding the favorable climate which cuts expenses inevitable in a more northern latitude, there is a large class that has a severe struggle to make ends meet.

Manual labor, unfortunately, is yielded to the Mexican, while the Japanese almost monopolize truck gardening. Unlike most of the Pacific Coast cities, this has never been a labor stronghold. For reasons that have been suggested, the labor unions have never succeeded in getting a grasp on the situation. They and the I.W.W. are carrying on active propaganda. With the extremes of fortune living so closely together there is little wonder that there is considerable social unrest.

These conditions have to be taken into consideration in shaping a policy that includes vocational training.

## GENERAL PLAN OF ORGANIZATION OF THE HIGH-SCHOOL SYSTEM

While legally distinct, the same board has charge of both elementary and high schools. The beneficial effect of this coalescence is seen in many ways, most strikingly in the adoption of the intermediate high-school plan. There are seven high schools and ten intermediate high schools. These latter receive pupils for the last two years in the grades and the first in the high school. They are helping to solve the problem of preventing the dropping out that is universally prevalent through non-adjustment to the new conditions under a teacher-for-a-subject school. Each of the seven high schools has its individual bias. Thus of the three largest, each enrolling about two thousand students, it may be said of one that it is distinctly academic and as such is the only one offering Greek; of the second that it is notable for offering technical training both for immediate use and as preparation for advanced technical schools; and of the third that preceding its curriculum is the following pregnant quotation: "to deal simultaneously with material forces and appliances; to cultivate not alone or chiefly the memory or the understanding, the eye to read and the mouth to speak, but the judgment and the executive faculties as well; and to extend the humanities so as to include human interests and human activities as they exist here and now"—an ideal that in equipment and staff this school is attempting to realize.

With this specialization each high school gives courses that lead to college entrance. The beneficial effect is evident in unification both as regards the different schools and in the different courses. A definite standard is demanded in the academic subjects up to which each must live. Courses not leading to matriculation fall into line. The universities keep watch on undergraduates from accredited schools and are not slow in reporting weakness.

## THREE REPRESENTATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

A few details of the work done in schools not as large as the foregoing will give some idea of the spirit that permeates the system. Of the three chosen the most beautiful is the Hollywood High

School. Hollywood is a wealthy residential district. Most of the students attending this school do not purpose undertaking a university course. The school aims at the study of "home-making disciplines." Thirteen courses are offered of which four are college preparatory. One is offered in each of the following subjects: science, English, commerce, mechanic arts, agriculture, art, home economics, and language and music. The buildings that house this delightful school are worthy of one of the most charming residence districts in southern California. Among things attempted for the boys is the opportunity to make that acquaintance with machinery required by active men of wealth, that skill in making simple repairs that all men need, and sufficient intimacy with craftsmanship to enable them to judge the worth of work done for them. The girls have unsurpassed equipment in domestic science. A suite of five rooms with pantries and kitchen forms a part of the domestic science building. This is used by the Seniors in turn for various purposes. For instance, the mothers of a group of four are invited for lunch. The decorations, arrangement of furniture, setting of table, menu, service, and cooking are appraised and accredited. It is part of the problem to submit a balanced menu at a fixed limit, say twenty-five cents. After the meal the napery is taken to the laundry and washed, ironed, and again inspected for appraisal. The purpose is similar to that in the case of the boys—to secure ability in estimating the worth of work done for them by others and skill to show how it should be done if that should be necessary. Other features of this remarkable institution—the home gardens, the school cafeteria managed by students that provides the midday meal for its fifteen hundred pupils, the physical training department that guards the health of every boy and girl, the simple, tasteful decorations of shop and sewing-room: these might be dwelt on but they are not confined to Hollywood. Enough has been said to indicate the spirit of the work. Strong in its confidence of the place it holds in the affections of the community, not long ago at a school function Hollywood displayed the motto *Noli me tangere*.

When greater Los Angeles was formed, the little town of Gardena situated half-way to the sea, found itself in the city on the "Shoe-

String." Its high school is taking advantage of its position in an agricultural community by specializing in the operations of the agriculturist. Fourteen acres are used for experimental purposes. The school is especially well manned. The heads of the different departments are experts. Their worth is recognized not only by the school authorities but also by various corporations who consult them frequently on problems that require that technical knowledge acquired by graduates of the modern agricultural college. The privilege of living on the farm, looking after the stock and performing other routine operations, is shared by half a dozen of the older boys. Small experimental plots are given to other boys and girls. A few thoroughbred animals have been purchased for the barnyard, the stable, the piggery, and the poultry-run. The courses are shaped to include landscape gardening and elementary forestry. All courses are closely related. Thus domestic science articulates with vegetable- and flower-growing, dairying, and drawing; the chemistry with domestic science and agriculture; and the manual training with farm operations. About four hundred pupils attend this school, its numbers having increased 400 per cent in four years. A point worthy of notice is that all girls wishing to graduate must take domestic science unless especially excepted.

San Pedro is the sea end of the dumb-bell shaped city. Some affirm that it will be the hand that will draw world-commerce to the central body. At present it has a population of six thousand. There are offered at its high school the usual literary, scientific, commercial, and mechanical courses, but there is specialization in marine biology and marine engineering. Fish and other sea economic products, their enemies, wood-destroyers, and other pests form the subject for biological study. The boys may use the shops and school time for building boats. A thirty-foot launch has been constructed under the direction of an experienced boat-builder. It will be used in prosecuting marine studies, while experience is being gained in running a power boat.

#### THE EVENING HIGH AND THE SUMMER HIGH SCHOOLS

A large number of wage-earners seize the opportunity of strengthening themselves in those subjects in which they feel



themselves weak by attending the evening high schools. While credits toward graduation are offered, few avail themselves of the privilege. The equipment of two of the largest schools is used. Twenty-five courses are possible.

The summer school, by doubling the length of each period, allows a half-term's work to be accomplished in six weeks. It was attended this year by over two thousand students. It is open in the morning only.

#### OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM

Such features as are peculiar to those acquainted only with the traditional education can be emphasized. The most striking fundamental is the attitude toward school work. There may be truth in the charge against these schools that scholarship is not the final aim. Initiation, leadership, efficiency, and scholarship through spontaneous interests are sought. Considering the large numbers this system reaches for whom the formal school has no place and whose presence colors the whole system, it is to be expected that a cursory oversight would not prejudice one trained under other conditions in favor of the new. There is, however, a buoyancy, an alertness, and a sense of happiness among the schools that are revealed in every department. One instructor gives this explanation: "Students remain till six and return Saturdays to worry over a mistake of one cent in their bookkeeping when they are handling the accounts of the cafeteria, who could with difficulty be interested in an ideal set of books." It is by focusing on living realities that real interest comes. The botany classes raise plants for decoration and for the cafeteria, their instructor having charge of the gardener. The domestic arts girl visits the butcher-shop to see a half-beef cut up, and prowls with her class over the new houses that are being erected near the school. The history students debate on current problems, ammunition for which is sought from their representatives in Congress and legislature. Students of sociology attend public meetings and report to their classmates. The English department, by wide courses of reading and by the use of themes the subject-matter of which is vital, relates school and life.

Probably the most important characteristic is the stress laid on physical culture. Each student receives medical examination on entering. All must take physical training. Without the consent of the school doctor and the recommendation of each teacher a pupil must not take over four solids and two extras a term—a frank obstruction against overloading. Special corrective exercises are given physical defectives. The boys are given indoor gymnasium work, but a large portion of the training, even in winter, is taken out of doors. In the Senior years they may submit tennis or other games. As with the boys, two periods weekly of forty minutes each for physical training are given the girls. Once a week for five months each year a period is given to hygiene. The aim of this course is to enable “each girl to realize her own health possibilities and to formulate intelligently her policy of health control.” All girls, whether taking gymnasium work or not, must report at the gymnasium at the time assigned, doff their tight clothes, and don their costumes of bloomers and blouse. Rest rooms with couches are supplied for those not taking part in the exercises. As in all supervised work, credit toward graduation is given for physical training.

Oral English is a notable feature. Grammar and composition are taken with literature under the subject of English for one period (forty minutes) daily. Oral English, however, is offered either two or three times a week as an “extra.” Pupils in these classes are trained to think on their feet; they discover and apply the laws affecting description, narration, exposition, and argumentation; they study different forms of speeches—introduction, announcement, welcome, farewell, nomination, etc.; they learn parliamentary law and practice debating. Each school is supplied with a large auditorium for assembly purposes. Students of the expression classes stage two or three plays a year, and positions in the cast are coveted. Each department enforces good oral work with the effect that most of the boys and girls express themselves fluently and forcefully.

Music receives a share of attention that surprises the visitor. Justification is not difficult in a city of music-lovers where grand opera at popular prices brings crowded houses winter after winter.

Excellent music is furnished in places of amusement and in restaurants and cafeterias. Glee clubs, orchestras, bands, the player piano, and the graphophone are used in the large schools. For those who care to study, a choice is offered between chorus work and musical appreciation. The latter provides instruction in the lives of the great composers and interpretation of their music. As "extras" both oral expression and music are open to all students of all courses, providing their programs will admit time for these subjects.

The industrial tone given to the system is a new feature in the new education. A distinction is made between industrial training and trade instruction. A trade school is under advisement for the two years previous to high school for those who are compelled to leave before entering the secondary institution. It will attempt to supplement the English already taught and to impart such knowledge of mathematics and general information as the particular trade undertaken absolutely requires. With these will go instruction in a certain form of skilled work. It is hoped that this school will do for the elementary schools what the present broad course is doing for the high schools, i.e., retain the pupil till he has some foundation for his life-work. The industrial idea, as distinct from the trade idea, is to impart such knowledge of, and skill in, the common performances of related manual or commercial operations as to give the youth a broad view of the field of his choice with some emphasis on the line he selects as his specialty. A somewhat lengthy illustration will make this clear. Take the course for a boy who purposes becoming a machinist, as laid down at the Manual Arts High School. During his first year, leading toward his chosen occupation, he will take woodshop with turning and finishing and mechanical drawing. In his second, forge and foundry will follow with freehand drawing. In his third he will have the choice of pattern-making, carpentry, or machine-shop and architectural drawing. Machine-shop will follow his final year. In addition to this manual work he will have shop mathematics his first year, geometry his second, and he may offer chemistry in place of architectural drawing in his third year and physics in his last. English is obligatory for two years and is optional with book-

keeping the third and with a foreign language the third and fourth. In his third year he must take United States history and civics. Music as an extra may be taken all four years or it may give place to oral English, spelling, vocational guidance, or biology lectures. Physical training is obligatory for all four years. In his final year he must take economics and sociology. All shopwork and drawing receive double periods (eighty minutes a day) as they involve no outside preparation. Two obvious points need scarcely be mentioned: the breadth of instruction and the forcing of cultural subjects if coveted ones are to be obtained.

Continuation classes are held in all the large schools. At Los Angeles High School the continuation class is organized separately and is known as the "junior college." Two years' work beyond the twelfth grade is taught. The experiment is a new one. It will strengthen the hold of the schools on those who have a genuine love for education but who cannot afford the expense of college, and it will give a vision to many who have not realized the value of thorough preparation and who may be led to make sacrifices to seek one of the larger institutions of learning. Full credit is given by the universities for this work.

Thus, through the intermediate school, which introduces the teacher-for-a-subject idea in the seventh and eighth grades and so prevents dropping out under the high-school system of instruction; through insisting, by a vigorous compulsory attendance office, on a correct attitude toward attendance in the elementary grades; through the provision of enticing courses of studies related to real life; through the encouragement of student self-government and the fullest sympathy with students' interests; through laying emphasis on work done every day rather than testing by semi-annual examinations for promotion; and through the continuation classes after graduation, students are kept in school and in touch with educational interests till they are led to seek that measure of training for which they are fitted. Of the twofold service in saving boys and girls for college and in saving others from college, who can say which is the more admirable?

Before passing to the statistical part of this sketch a few words must be said of the spirit of the students. Each school conscious

of its excellences is not over-modest in singing its praises. As each school activity unfolds with the progress of the calendar year, grand rallies are held, each more important than the last, where superlatives are exhausted by the speakers and throats by the student body. It would be a strange youth who would not be caught by some of these activities: Rugby, soccer, basket-ball, handball, tennis, hockey, track, water polo, wrestling, fencing, and archery, with dramatics, debating, and folk-dancing suggest some of the lighter interests. At the time of the inter-school football contests, enthusiasm runs at its highest. Over five thousand spectators witnessed the closing games last fall. That school spirit may be used for other purposes is evidenced by the plant at Polytechnic. The laborious work of fencing the school grounds was cheerfully done by the boys, while the large art building was designed by the students in the architectural classes. Many of the repairs in the different schools are looked after by the high-school students. When a play is staged, most of the costumes are made in the domestic science rooms, the special scenery in the shops and the art departments. At the great pageant held this June one thousand costumes used by one school were made by its boys and girls. The statement is frequently made, "Think what the school is doing for you. What can you do in return?"

#### HOLDING POWER OF THE SYSTEM

The following statistics will show the measure of success of the system and may serve as a basis of comparison with that in other cities. The authorities constantly estimate on 75 per cent of all eighth-grade pupils entering high school. Frequently the percentage is higher than this. In 1914, 3,702 graduated from the grammar schools, of whom about 2,000 finished in June. There were enrolled in the Freshman year in September 3,534, of whom 2,371 were in the first half.

In order to obtain a rough idea of the power of the system to retain pupils till their course is completed it may be stated that, in 1910, 2,782 students were enrolled in the ninth year. The number enrolled in the twelfth year in 1914 was 1,380, while 1,257 graduated. The figures for the previous year give nearly the

same story: enrolled ninth year (1909), 2,197; enrolled twelfth year (1913), 1,187; graduates, 1,088.

For the sake of comparison with other communities the enrolment and population are herewith given:

Year	Enrolment Ninth Year	Population
1908. ....	2,236	302,600
1910. ....	2,782	319,200
1913. ....	3,543	425,000

In the year 1914-15, 72,000 attended the elementary schools, and 20,000 were given high-school instruction, 6,500 of whom attended the evening school.

The press in its editorial columns is strongly behind the schools, and the ubiquitous "Constant Reader," while complaining of every conceivable service, seldom offers adverse criticism of the schools. The Chamber of Commerce last year, at the invitation of the School Board, recommended an expert from Chicago. He received \$2,500 for sixteen weeks' service, during which time he placed the question of mercantile efficiency before the commercial teachers.

Nor will this esteem decrease. The courses are swinging more and more toward vocational work. It is probable that a new office will be created—that of vocational supervisor. It will be the duty of this officer to keep in touch with the industrial and commercial world on the one hand and the schools on the other. He will advise as to the courses of study, oversee the practice in the schools, keep an eye on the graduates, and note openings for those coming out. As there are over twenty vocational and prevocational courses in the system the position is a natural outgrowth, not a graft. It means that students are to be encouraged to find themselves as soon as possible. There will be less wasted time and less fruitless and purposeless effort. The staffs are being trained to be on the alert to guide, suggest, and arouse with this end in view.

It may be frankly admitted that the system is costly, if we may place the material against the spiritual. For the year 1914 the

state granted \$83,381, the county \$1,246,556 for high-school purposes. The cost per pupil for average daily attendance, including all expenses except permanent improvements, was \$128.98.

#### SOCIOLOGICAL BASIS

One cannot but be struck by the great social influence that lies in this institution, in its attempt to solve the problems of modern American life. The home is receiving far-reaching benefit in girls with cultivated tastes, with a sane health outlook, and with a scientific attitude toward household affairs—girls who recognize that housekeeping presents problems that are worthy of the best they can give, but who can be financially independent if necessary. Rich and poor are meeting in the unrestricted democracy of youth. It reminds us of the traditions that have come from the Dark Ages when the passion for education caught the young men of Europe who flocked to the seats of learning at Bologna, Paris, Padua, and Oxford, men of all ranks and tongues. In these high schools a body of trained workers is being raised whose members have had an introduction to the essentials of literature, science, and sociology. These will one day be leaders in the ranks of labor. On the other hand are youths who will be leaders of another sort. They are being trained in the only way possible for an appreciation of the contribution of the workers to the world-fabric. In the shops, over the forge, at the bench, in the school, in the millinery room, and on the campus both types are today performing the same tasks on an equal footing.

#### THE END

So these schools are doing a great work. In a very real sense are they the public schools, the "people's university." No longer is the motor-minded youth crowded out of his chance for a glimpse of the worlds that man has discovered. No longer need he feel inferiority beside his differently endowed brother—the ideominded youth. Here he finds a recognition of the value of his talent and an opportunity to develop it. If in taking the opportunity he must submit to studies he does not like, he cheerfully submits. So does the system attempt to meet all classes and all kinds in preparing them for efficient life.